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Have Gun, Will Sell

This country has become the world's largest salesman of all modern weapons short of nuclear bombs, and the biggest consumer of small arms. Germany and Japan, bitter beaten foes of 20 years ago, are America's chief customers for arms. Encouraged to buy new US tanks, the Germans sell slightly older tanks to the Israelis, while German scientists help Egypt build rockets. Firms that trafficked in arms for profit used to be tagged merchants of death and governments were urged to control sales of munitions. Now the Department of Defense helps arrange credits that swell the sales.

While our government eagerly pushes its tanks and planes into foreign hands, foreigners transform the US into the world's biggest dumping ground for cut-rate small arms, so that we now have a huge domestic disarmament problem. The Italian gun the Warren Commission said Lee Harvey Oswald used to kill President Kennedy was only one of 1.5 million foreign guns dumped here that year with low-price tags tied to their barrels. This weird import trade continues. Partly because of prodding by Senator Robert Kennedy and Representative Charles S. Joelson (D, N.J.), the Pentagon recently ceased selling surplus guns to Americans, except for scrap. But continued imports of guns mean that self-appointed vigilantes and criminals can go on arming themselves. Why doesn't the Administration and Congress do something about this dangerous import trade and, while they are about it, take a hard second look at the Pentagon's vigorous pushing of arms sales abroad?

The facts are these. Defense spending abroad contributes about \$1.7 billion a year to the US adverse payments balance. Determined to wipe this from the ledger, the Pentagon has pushed up arms sales abroad from \$350 million to \$1.5 billion a year. Elated by this "success," which has made the US the biggest arms trader in the world, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Henry J. Kuss Jr. aims to raise the annual sales figure to \$5.4 billion by 1967 or bust. Last month Mr. Kuss got the Defense Secretary's Meritorious Civilian Service Medal for his efforts as arms salesman-in-chief. It must have made Mr. McNamara feel he was back at Ford, exhorting the boys to make this an even bigger year. Before Mr. Kuss picked up the arms sales torch it was borne by Paul Nitze, who when he was Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs declared: "If we are to compete successfully for this business we can't rely on repeat sales. We will have . . . an active national program involving the industrial, banking and government sectors." When President Eisenhower

warned against the "military-industrial complex" he little knew how much bigger it would grow, how soon.

The Pentagon's push has annoyed America's allies. The British especially depend on arms sales abroad to help pay for their troops abroad. Most of these troops are in Germany, who was Britain's best customer for arms until the US got the business. The British grumble that the Yanks grabbed it unfairly, by putting political pressure on the Germans. British Brigadier W. F. K. Thompson says bitterly that what the US really wants when it insists on arms standardization in NATO is "acceptance by others of American ideas and equipment." The Pentagon replies that the British would be able to compete if they took fewer teabreaks. Actually nobody can compete with the US, which outspends all other countries on arms research and development and has in the Pentagon the world's biggest built-in customer. But talk of efficiency in competing is beside the point. The competition should stop before it leads to worldwide proliferation of conventional weapons which would be almost as dangerous as nuclear proliferation. In its place, there has to be coordination of the West's arms research and arms industries, to match the degree of coordination that has been achieved (but still needs improving) of the West's defenses. Japan and India have to be consulted and somewhere along the line the Soviet Union has to be brought in, although as of now Soviet arms sales abroad are running at only \$400 million a year—far below the US annual figure of \$1.5 billion that the Pentagon wants to treble.

Freedom of the Mails

Congress in 1962 provided that "Communist political propaganda" mailed to the United States from abroad was to be stopped, examined, and sent on to the addressee only if, upon being notified of what was held for him, he expressly requested delivery. Material for which one subscribed, and all mail addressed to government agencies and educational institutions were exempted. Authority to diagnose a given piece of mail as "Communist political propaganda" was given the Customs service under a complex statutory definition.

On May 24, a unanimous Supreme Court held this statute unconstitutional. Nobody but its legislative father, Rep. Glenn Cunningham (R, Neb.) mourned its passing. The Administration, through Postmaster General John Gronouski, expressed relief. The Supreme Court itself experienced no difficulty in reaching a result that the Justices apparently thought almost obvious. To be sure, there lurked in the statute a curious constitutional problem, namely, whether the First Amendment confers protection upon materials written

and printed abroad by a foreign government; whether, in other words, the First Amendment confers any rights on, say, the government of the Soviet Union. The answer to this question might lie in the late Justice Jackson's remark that the Constitution ought not to be construed as a suicide pact. But this problem did not arise because the statute inhibited not merely the freedom to send, but the freedom to receive.

The requirement to come forward and ask for delivery of what had been officially labeled "Communist political propaganda" cannot have failed to have a deterrent effect on prospective recipients, especially those who might have cause to think about their security clearances. This sort of deterrent, in these circumstances, the Court held, infringes a right guaranteed by the First Amendment. For as Justice Brennan said, "it would be a barren marketplace of ideas that had only sellers and no buyers."

The AMA Budget

What would happen to the American Medical Association in the unlikely event of all-out socialized medicine for the US. For one thing, the AMA's annual budget would be considerably cut. According to a (very sketchy) summary of finances in its weekly *News*, the AMA spent almost 30 percent of its \$23.3 million budget last year on "paper, printing and mailing," and another 10.7 percent on "communications," which together or separately is a lot for propaganda against Medicare (and other social ills). The second biggest expense was 17.8 percent for "business," which might be cut, too, with less communicating and paper work.

For an organization so concerned about keeping up professional standards, there was remarkably little money spent for medical activities: \$914,000 for scientific publications (*The Journal* and 10 others); \$2.3 million for "scientific activities"; and \$1.3 million was spent for "socio-economic activities," but it is unclear from the published report whether that should be added to the "scientific" column or to "paper, printing and mailing." (Socio-economic includes "the work of Washington, D.C., medical liaison representatives," which sounds like more "communications.")

The AMA's biggest source of income turns out to be not membership dues or subscriptions to publications, but advertising. It accounts for 44.8 percent of the total income (a quarter of a million dollars less than expenses last year, unfortunately). With a national health program that included free or at-cost drugs and medical supplies, that ad revenue would drop also.

All the figures almost make one forget about the inalienable right to choose one's own physician from a cast of thousands in the Yellow Pages.